

MAPS  
BUFFALO HARBOR  
1804-1964

BY  
HENRY H. BAXTER  
ERIK HEYL



THE CHINAMAN LIGHT  
1833

G  
1254  
.B9  
P53  
1965

Published by  
Lower Lakes Marine Chapter  
of

Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society

Henry H. Baxter and Erik Heyl

Editors



Buffalo Harbor from Lake Erie  
1835  
Lithograph by Magary

Buffalo, New York  
1965

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P R E F A C E

The St. Lawrence Seaway is the direct cause of a tremendous development of the harbors and facilities in the ports on the Great Lakes. The frequent calls of deep-draft, ocean-going freighters, plus the great increase in size of the modern bulk-freight carriers of the Great Lakes, made it imperatively necessary to improve and enlarge nearly all harbor facilities, such as wharves, slips, channels, freight terminals and accessories.

These projects, of course, vitally affected Buffalo and greatly stimulated the public's interest in the city's harbor, its improvements and changes. In fact, the present day conditons and planning may well be compared to the same situation in the 1850's and 1860's when large-scale plans were made for an extensive series of canals and basins connecting with the Buffalo River, all forming a network of inland water ways.

It is because of this very general public interest in our harbor, the Lower Lakes Marine Chapter of the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society has produced and published this brochure: Maps of Buffalo Harbor, 1804 - 1964. The job could not have been accomplished without the generous help and co-operation of the Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society; the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library; U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District; J.W. Clement Co.; Buffalo Evening News; Buffalo Courier-Express, Municipal Public Works Department, Engineering Division; and others, to all of whom the Members of the Lower Lakes Marine Chapter extend their appreciative acknowledgement. The Nesser Foundation of Buffalo, whose sponsorship made it possible to produce this brochure, receives our grateful thanks.

The maps shown extend over a period of 160 years - from 1804 to 1964 and in them are shown the major changes as they took place. Also shown are projects which

PREFACE - Continued

were planned but did not materialize, probably chiefly because of changes in the methods and types of transportation. All of the maps, with the exception of the two facing maps of the elevator district, face an index in which are listed the important land-marks in the map and which are identified by letters in the index and on the map. It is pointed out that throughout all indexes and maps the SAME LETTERS ALWAYS IDENTIFY THE SAME LANDMARKS, e.g., the Buffalo Creek or River is always (A); Little Buffalo Creek is always (B); Erie Canal is always lettered (F), etc.

As a usual rule, the area to the north of Porter Avenue has been omitted; there have been but minor changes, excepting the conversion of the Erie Canal in its entire length into the Niagara Thruway. Also, it was most important to show the commercial and business area from the Foot of Genesee Street to the Ohio Street bridge in the largest feasible scale consistent with the space available on each page. The odd configuration of the Buffalo water-front presented a difficult task. Therefore, as far as practical or necessary, all maps are shown to the approximate same relative scale and depict about the same areas, except the map showing detail of Black Rock Locks at Amherst and Austin Streets.

HENRY BAXTER

ERIK HEYL

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

June 1965

## HARBOR DEVELOPMENT NOTES

### Phases of Harbor Development

1. Pre 1818 - no improvements
2. Improvement of inland channels - starting in 1818 with Buffalo Creek followed by digging of Erie Canal and other artificial waterways and slips.
3. Outer harbor begun in 1868

The inland channel phase suited the small lake boats of the early years and canal boats. The inland channels reached their peak in about 1885 when there were about 20 miles of waterways. By 1902 they were in a marked decline, the Hamburg Canal and a number of slips having been abandoned. Lake boats were becoming larger and the Erie Canal was in the last days of animal power. In 1964 about all that remains of the inland channels are the City Ship Canal and Buffalo Creek, and there are no plans for deepening them to the 20' of the outer harbor or to accommodate super lakers and seaway sized ships.

The outer harbor development began in 1868. It appears now that as ships become even larger, we will end up with only the outer harbor, lined possibly with finger piers, and a few deep water slips such as the Union of Lackawanna Canals.

The building of the "All American Canal" (a preferred name: The Niagara Ship Canal) would change things.

### Changes in Harbor Traffic

In the 1800's most freight handled was for transshipment east by canal or railroad. The passenger business was also very important especially the movement of immigrants west.

In 1964 passenger traffic is gone (we are served by one aging cruise ship). Transshipment is also largely a thing of the past: instead our major tonnage is in bulk commodities to be consumed mostly by our Buffalo steel and grain industries. There is also some movement of finished and semi-finished goods, both inbound and outbound. Due to the seaway, there is some increase in package freight.

### Changes in Boats

Capacitywise 1000 tons was large before 1850 but by 1900 10,000 tons was being approached. Today super lakers will carry 25,000 tons which is the equivalent of 250 Clinton's Ditch barges or 100 enlarged Erie Canal barges or 10 of Barge canal size.

As mentioned, passenger boats are about gone, but on the other hand, we are seeing more and more "salties" as a result of the seaway.

A special type of passenger vessel we no longer see are the hand powered sculls (a sort of harbor taxi) that were once a common sight, and the usual way to get from the mainland to "The Island" or to ships moored off shore.



## HARBOR DEVELOPMENT NOTES - Continued

### Planning and Progress

You will note that the maps show many proposed channels, slips, ship canals, etc. which remind us of maps issued today showing proposed city improvements. The process of planning seems to involve basically, the putting forth of many schemes in order to find the few to be chosen and we can look back now and see how past decisions have worked out.

A wise decision was the Blackwell (City Ship) Canal - which has served (and continues to serve) important industry for over a century.

A blunder was the enlarged Ohio Basin (carried out in early 1900's as part of Barge Canal program). This eliminated some thriving businesses and itself was really never used and is now filled in.

Today we are disgusted by the lack of progress on the Ellicott District and waterfront redevelopment projects. Yet the Main and Hamburg Canal was authorized by the City Council in 1833 but not completed until 1852 (by the State of New York) - 19 years to build a 1 mile long canal. So in some things there is little change.

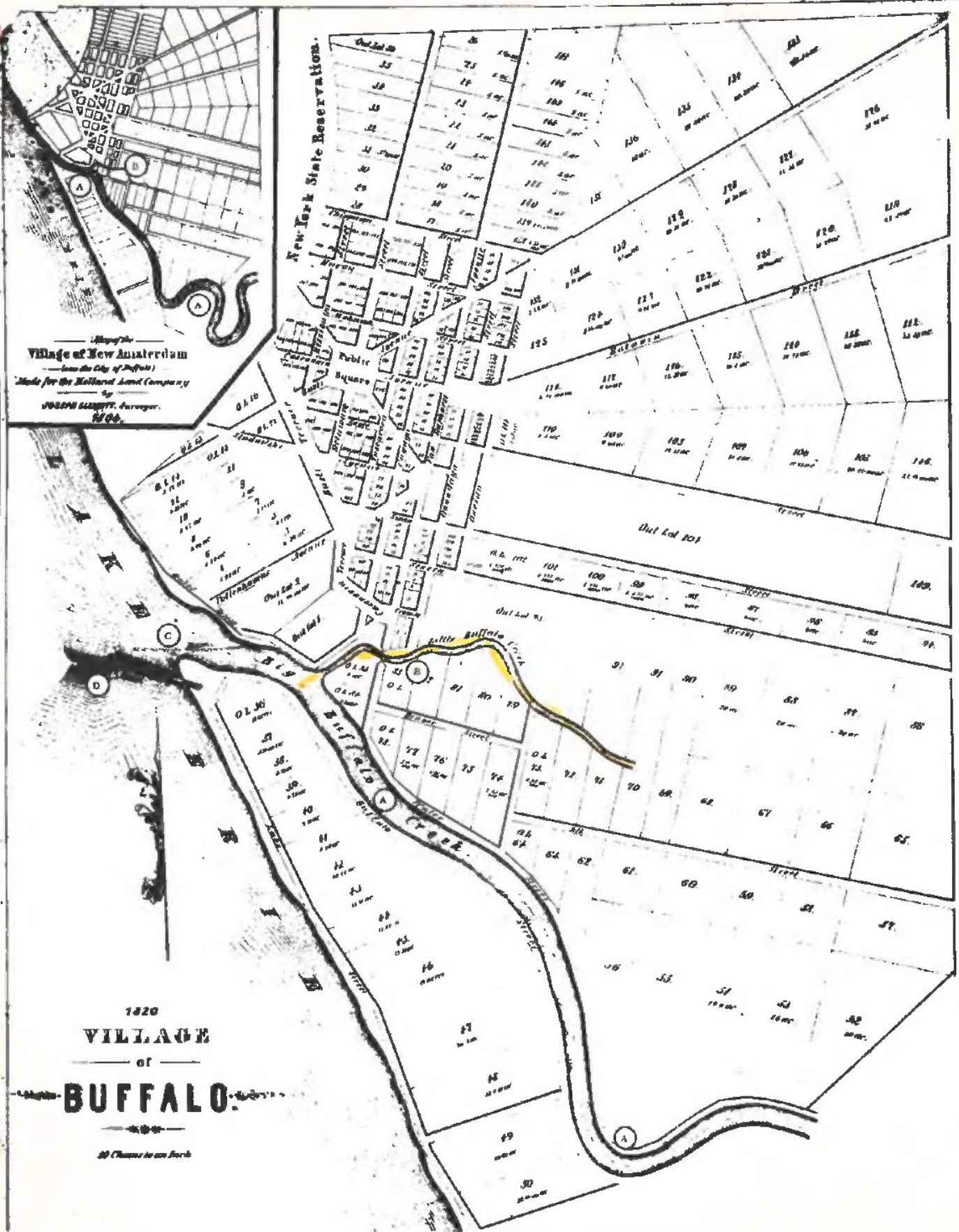
## 1804

- (A) Buffalo Creek - navigable for canoes and batteux only, due to sand bar at mouth
- (B) Little Buffalo Creek - Rose near present intersection of Bailey and Broadway

## 1820

- (A) Buffalo Creek - Now navigable for largest ships of time, due to improvements by Wilkeson and others.
- (B) Little Buffalo Creek
- (C) Sheet piling - Intended to deflect flow of Creek so as to wash away sand bar at its mouth
- (D) South Pier - Built 1820 - still standing





- (A) Buffalo Creek
  - (B) Little Buffalo Creek
  - (C) Sheet Piling to deflect current  
of Buffalo Creek and Scour Sand  
Bar
  - (D) South Pier
  - (E) 1st Lighthouse
  - (F) Erie Canal - Completed 1825 -  
Connected to Buffalo Creek by  
Little Buffalo Creek - Connection  
later became known as Prime Slip
- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| VOLLENHOVEN AVE.  | now ERIE STREET         |
| WILLINK AVE.      | now MAIN STREET,        |
|                   | south of Shelton Square |
| VANSTOPHORST AVE. | now MAIN STREET,        |
|                   | north of Shelton Square |
| BUSTI AVE.        | now GENESEE STREET      |
| STADNITSKI AVE.   | now CHURCH STREET       |

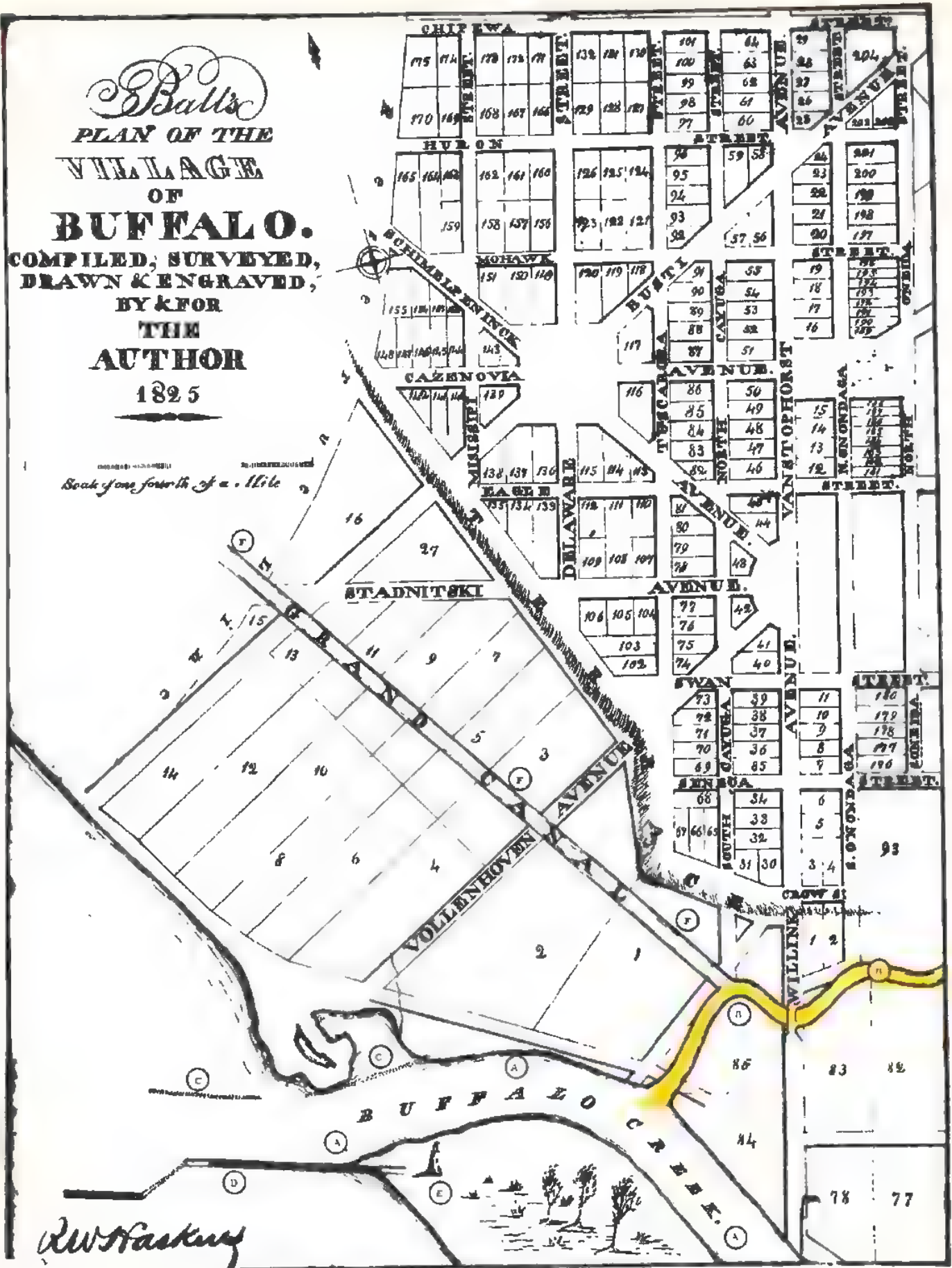


*Distant view of Black Rock and vicinity.*



*Ball's*  
**PLAN OF THE  
VILLAGE  
OF  
BUFFALO.**  
COMPILED, SURVEYED,  
DRAWN & ENGRAVED,  
BY & FOR  
THE  
AUTHOR  
1825

*Scale of one fourth of a mile*





- (A) Buffalo Creek - Channel depth 10 feet
- (af) Showing up-stream is dam and hydraulic work constructed 1826 which supplied mills located east of Exchange and Hamburg Sts. and also later on Hydraulic St. Hydraulic St. race still passes beneath Larkin Warehouse. Additional water was obtained by damming Buffalo Creek near Harlem Road and carrying water by Canal to Little Buffalo Creek.
- (D) South Pier
- (E) 1st Lighthouse
- (F) Erie Canal
- (G) 2nd Lighthouse - Built 1833 - "Chinaman Light"
- (H) Evans Ship Canal - Privately owned
- (I) Commercial Slip
- (J) Prime Slip
- (K) Proposed Main & Hamburg Canal (not built until 1848-51)
- (L) Clark & Skinner Canal
- (M) Proposed Ohio Slip - Built 1848-9
- (N) Proposed South Channel - Never built
- (O) Peacocks Slip
- (P) Wilkeson Slip
- (Q) Marine Railway - Site of Shipyard until 1964



(City of)  
OF THE  
**CITY OF BUFFALO,**

By  
W. A. GILBERT,  
City Surveyor.

Published  
By A. NEWLICK,  
1878.

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (A) Buffalo Creek   | (M) Ohio Slip - Under construction<br>complete 1850.   |
| (B) Little Buffalo Creek - Soon<br>to be by-passed by Hamburg<br>Canal        | (N) Proposed South Channel -<br>never built            |
| (D) South Pier  | (O) Peacocks Basin                                     |
| (E) 1st Lighthouse  | (P) Wilkeson Slip                                      |
| (F) Erie Canal  | (Q) Shipyard - Dry dock has been<br>added              |
| (G) 1833 Lighthouse   | (R) Ohio Basin - Under construction<br>- complete 1851 |
| (H) Evans Ship Canal - Dart's<br>steam powered elevator<br>built here in 1842 | (S) Erie Basin - Under construction                    |
| (I) Commercial Slip   | (T) Sea Wall   |
| (J) Prime Slip  | (U) Hatch Slip - (On the "Island")                     |
| (K) Main & Hamburg Canal - under<br>construction - complete 1851              | (V) Kinne & Wadhams Slip (On the<br>"Island")          |
| (L) Clark & Skinner Canal   | (W) Proposed City Ship<br>(E. R. Blackwell) Canal      |



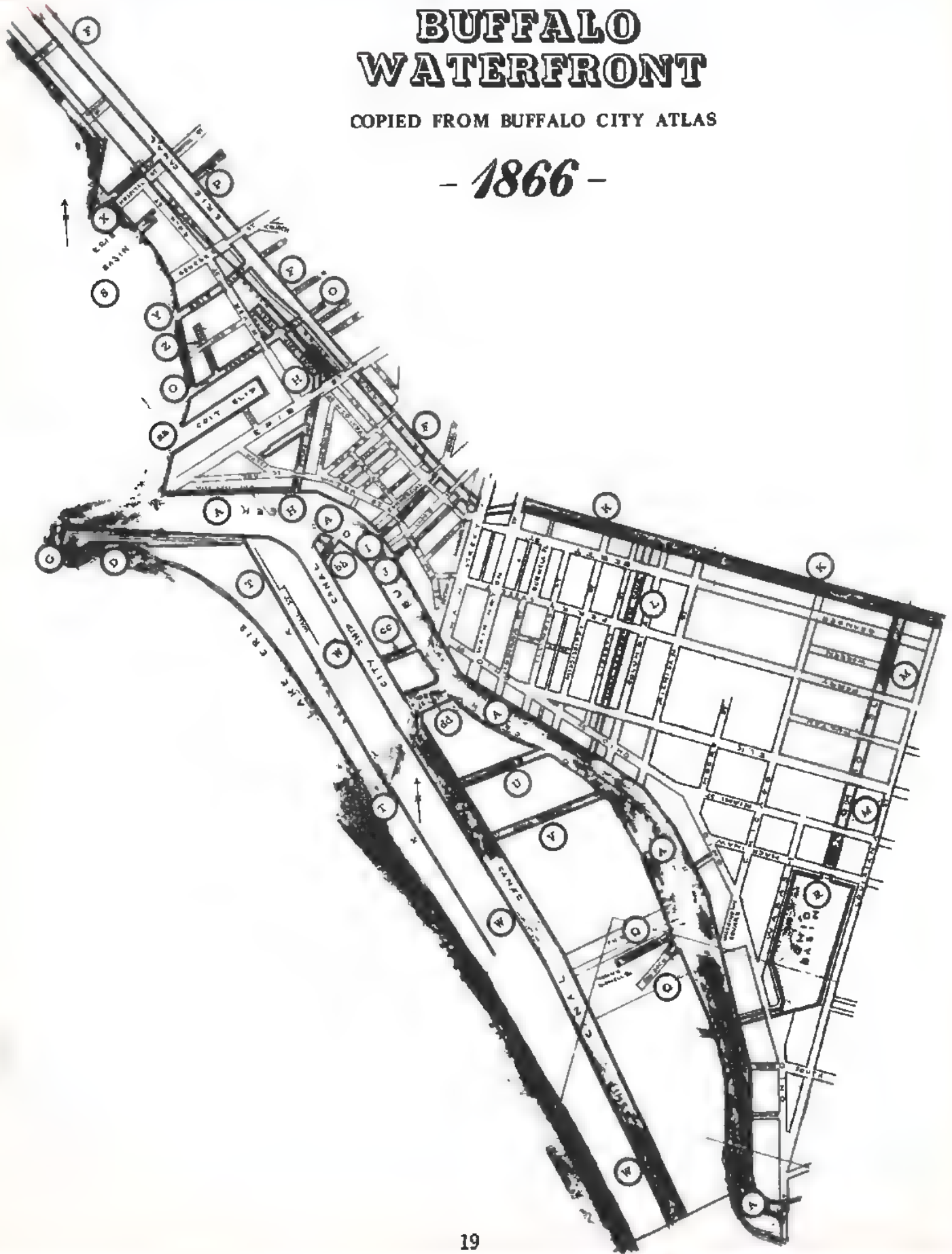


- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| (A) Buffalo Creek   | (Q) Ship Yard                        |
| (D) South Pier  | (R) Ohio Basin                       |
| (F) Erie Canal  | (S) Erie Basin                       |
| (G) 1833 Lighthouse                                       | (T) Sea Wall                         |
| (H) Evans Ship Canal                                      | (U) Hatch Slip                       |
| (I) Commercial Slip                                       | (V) Kinne & Wadhams Slip             |
| (J) Prime Slip  | (W) City Ship Canal                  |
| (K) Main & Hamburg Canal                                  | (X) Niagara (No. 3) Slip             |
| (L) Clark & Skinner Canal                                 | (Y) Erie (No. 2) Slip                |
| (M) Ohio Slip   | (Z) Palmers Slip                     |
| (O) Peacock's Slip extended<br>to Erie Basin (Slip No. 1) | (aa) Coit Slip                       |
| (P) Wilkesons Slip  | (bb) Watson Slip (On the "Island")   |
|   | (cc) Richmond Slip (On the "Island") |
|   | (dd) Peck Slip (On the "Island")     |

# MAP OF BUFFALO WATERFRONT

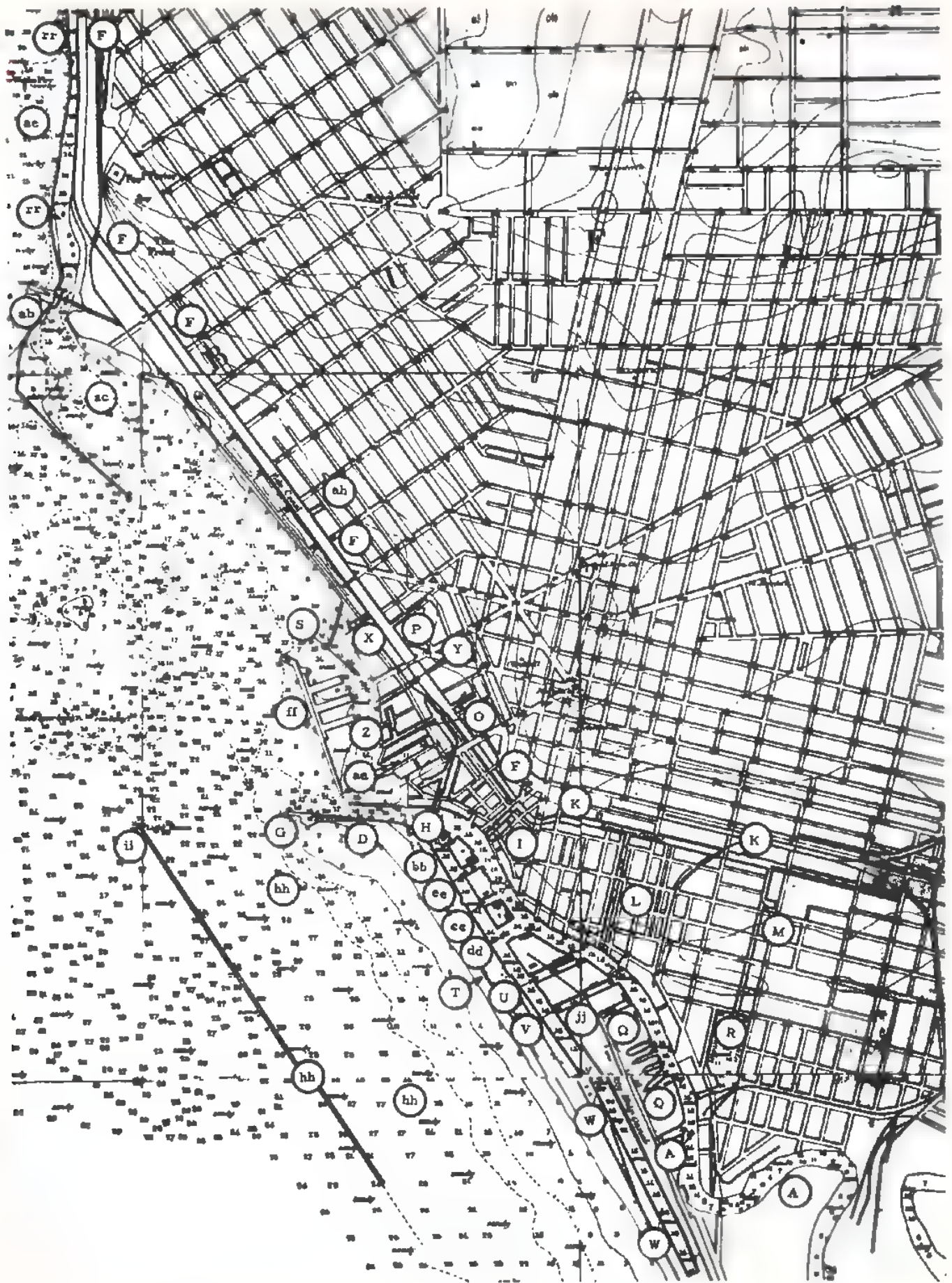
COPIED FROM BUFFALO CITY ATLAS

- 1866 -



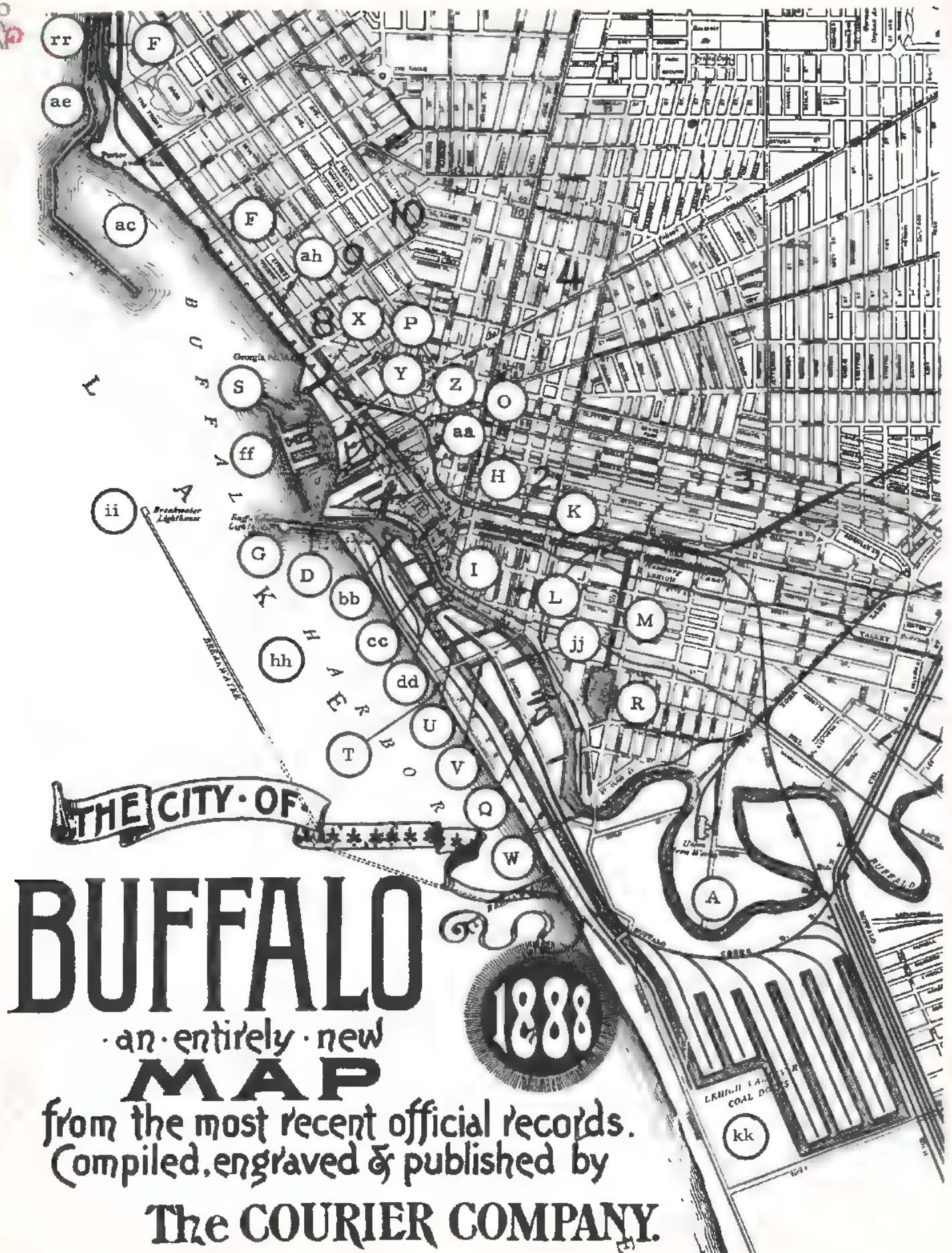


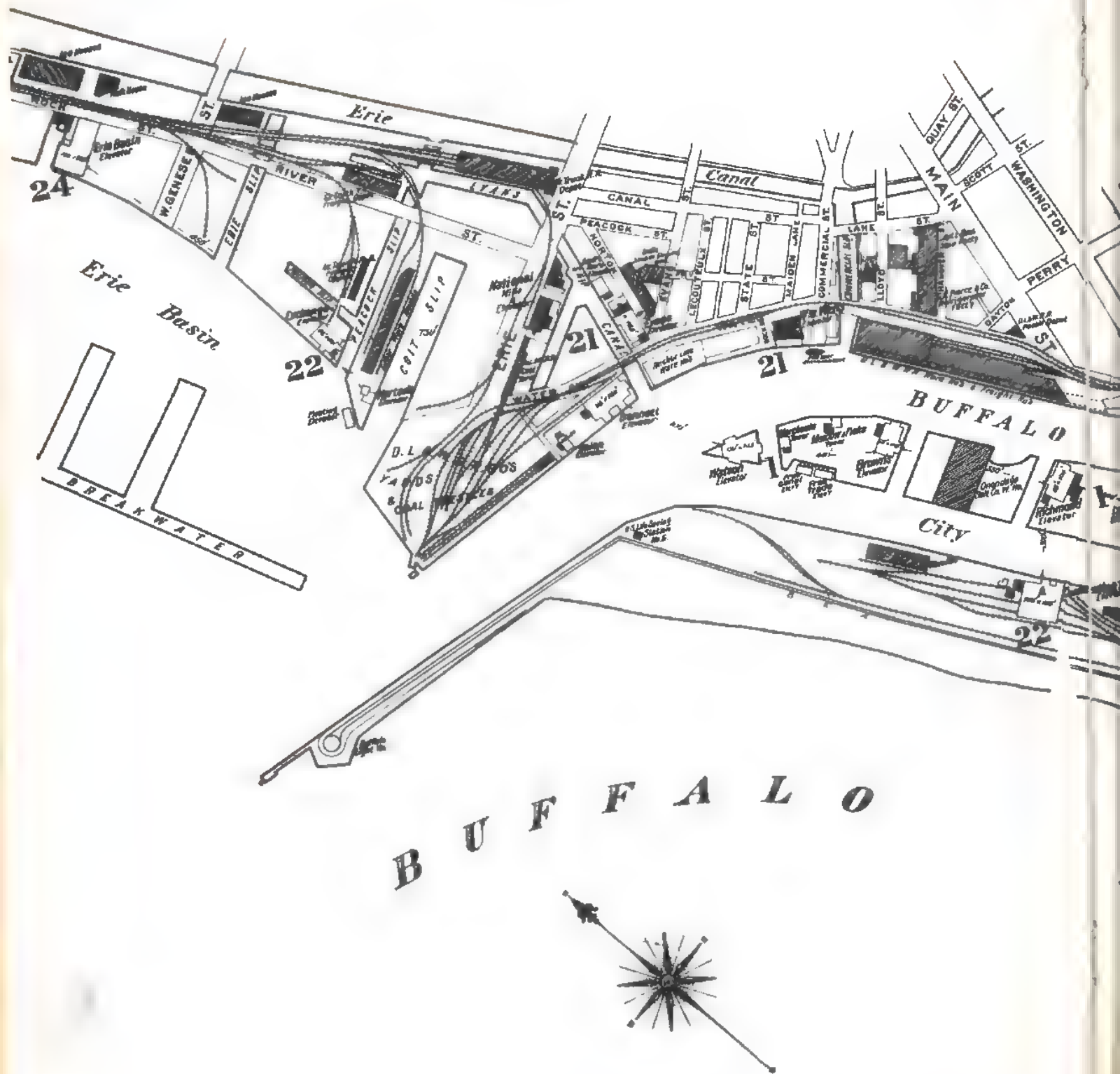
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (A) Buffalo Creek - now 15 to 18 feet deep | (Y) Erie Slip   |
| (D) South Pier                             | (Z) Palmers Slip  |
| (F) Erie Canal                             | (aa) Coit Slip  |
| (G) 1833 Lighthouse                        | (bb) Watsons Slip   |
| (H) Evans Ship Canal                       | (cc) Richmond Slip  |
| (I) Commercial Slip                        | (dd) Peck Slip  |
| (K) Main & Hamburg Canal                   | (ee) Island Slip  |
| (L) Clark & Skinner Canal                  | (ff) Erie Basin Breakwall with 3 finger piers   |
| (M) Ohio Slip                              | (hh) Outer Harbor - Enclosed by 1st Section Outer Breakwater, begun 1869                      |
| (O) Peacock Slip                           | (ii) Breakwater Lighthouse (3rd)  |
| (P) Wilkeson Slip                          | (JJ) Western Slip   |
| (Q) Shipyard - now has 4 drydocks          | (rr) Black Rock Canal   |
| (R) Ohio Basin                             | (ab) Ferry Landing to Fort Erie Grand Trunk Ry. formerly B & L H Ry abandoned in Fall of 1874 |
| (S) Erie Basin                             | (ac) Black Rock Harbor  |
| (T) Sea Wall                               | (ae) Niagara River  |
| (U) Hatch Slip                             | (ah) Hingston's Slip Tug and Canal Boat Yard  |
| (V) Kinne & Wadhams Slip                   |   |
| (W) City Ship Canal                        |   |
| (X) Niagara Slip                           |   |



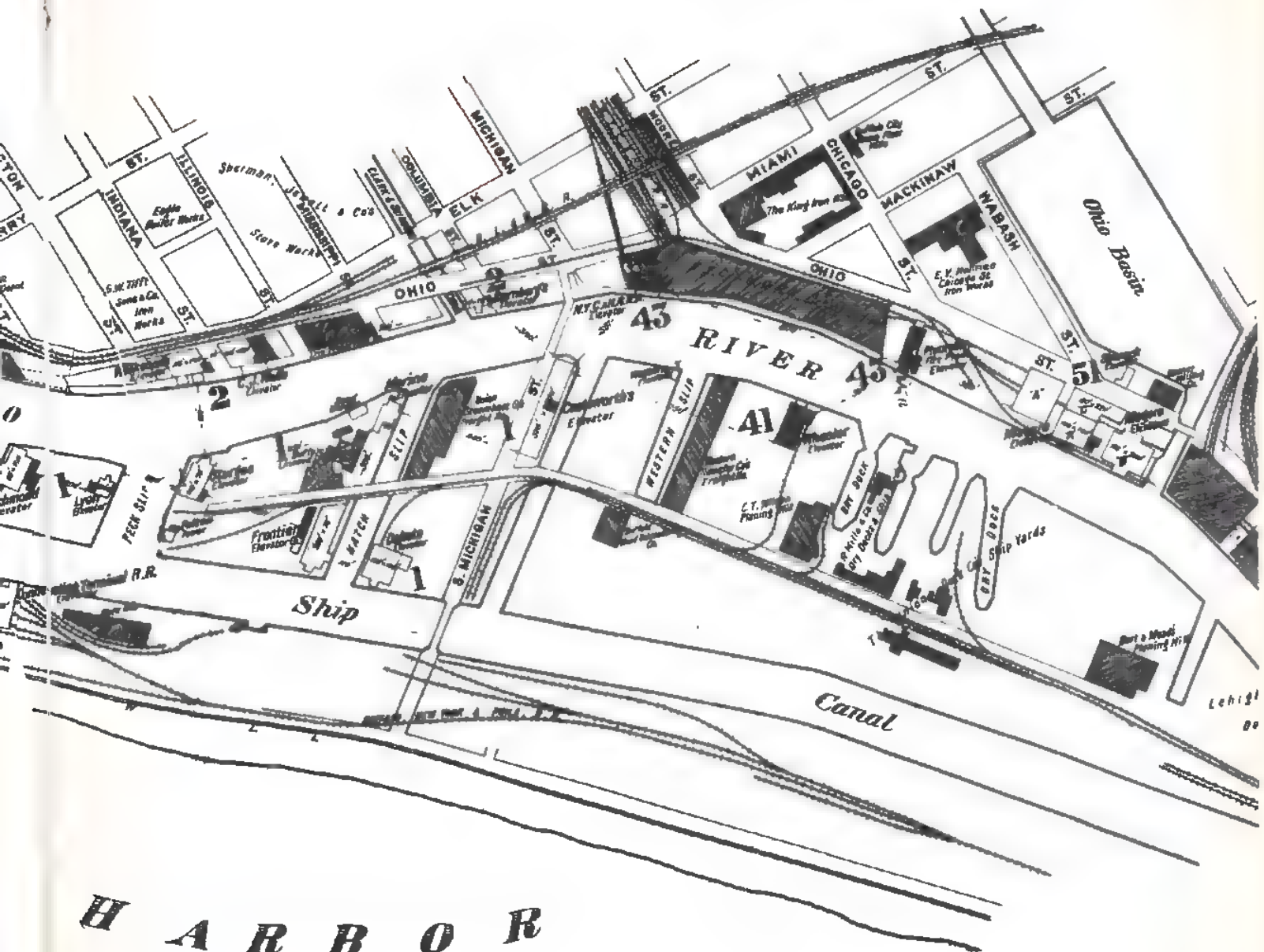
- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| (A) Buffalo Creek         | (Y) Erie Slip  |
| (D) South Pier            | (Z) Palmers Slip   |
| (F) Erie Canal            | (aa) Coit Slip   |
| (G) 1833 Lighthouse       | (bb) Watsons Slip  |
| (H) Evans Ship Canal      | (cc) Richmond Slip   |
| (I) Commercial Slip       | (dd) Peck Slip   |
| (K) Hamburg Canal         | (ff) Erie Basin Breakwall and<br>Finger Piers  |
| (L) Clark & Skinner Canal | (hh) Outer Harbor  |
| (M) Ohio Slip             | (ii) Breakwater Lighthouse   |
| (O) Peacock Slip          | (jj) Western Slip  |
| (P) Wilkeson Slip         | (kk) Lehigh Valley Basin (only<br>partly completed)<br>The 3 Easterly Slips never<br>constructed |
| (Q) Shipyard              | (rr) Black Rock Canal - note wall<br>separating it from Erie Canal                               |
| (R) Ohio Basin            | (ac) Black Rock Harbor - also shown<br>as adjacent to Squaw Island on<br>some maps               |
| (S) Erie Basin            | (ae) Niagara River   |
| (T) Sea Wall              | (ah) Hingston Slip. Tug and Canal<br>Boat Yard   |
| (U) Hatch Slip            |  |
| (V) Kinne & Wadhams Slip  |  |
| (W) City Ship Canal       |  |
| (X) Niagara Slip          |  |







1889  
ELEVATOR DISTRICT SOUTHERN HALF





- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (A) Buffalo Creek                      | (X) Niagara Slip                                     |
| (D) South Pier                         | (Y) Erie Slip  |
| (F) Erie Canal                         | (aa) Coit Slip                                       |
| (G) 1833 Lighthouse                    | (cc) Richmond Slip                                   |
| (H) Evans Ship Canal                   | (dd) Peck Slip                                       |
| (I) Commercial Slip                    | (ff) Erie Basin Breakwall -<br>Finger Piers are gone |
| (L) Clark & Skinner Canal              | (hh) Outer Harbor - Extended to<br>Lackawanna        |
| (M) Ohio Slip (Partially<br>abandoned) | (ii) Breakwater Lighthouse                           |
| (O) Peacock Slip                       | (jj) Western Slip                                    |
| (R) Ohio Basin                         | (ll) Lehigh Valley Basin                             |
| (S) Erie Basin                         | (mm) North Breakwater                                |
| (U) Hatch Slip                         | (ac) Black Rock Harbor                               |
| (V) Kinne & Wadhams Slip               |  |
| (W) City Ship Canal                    |  |

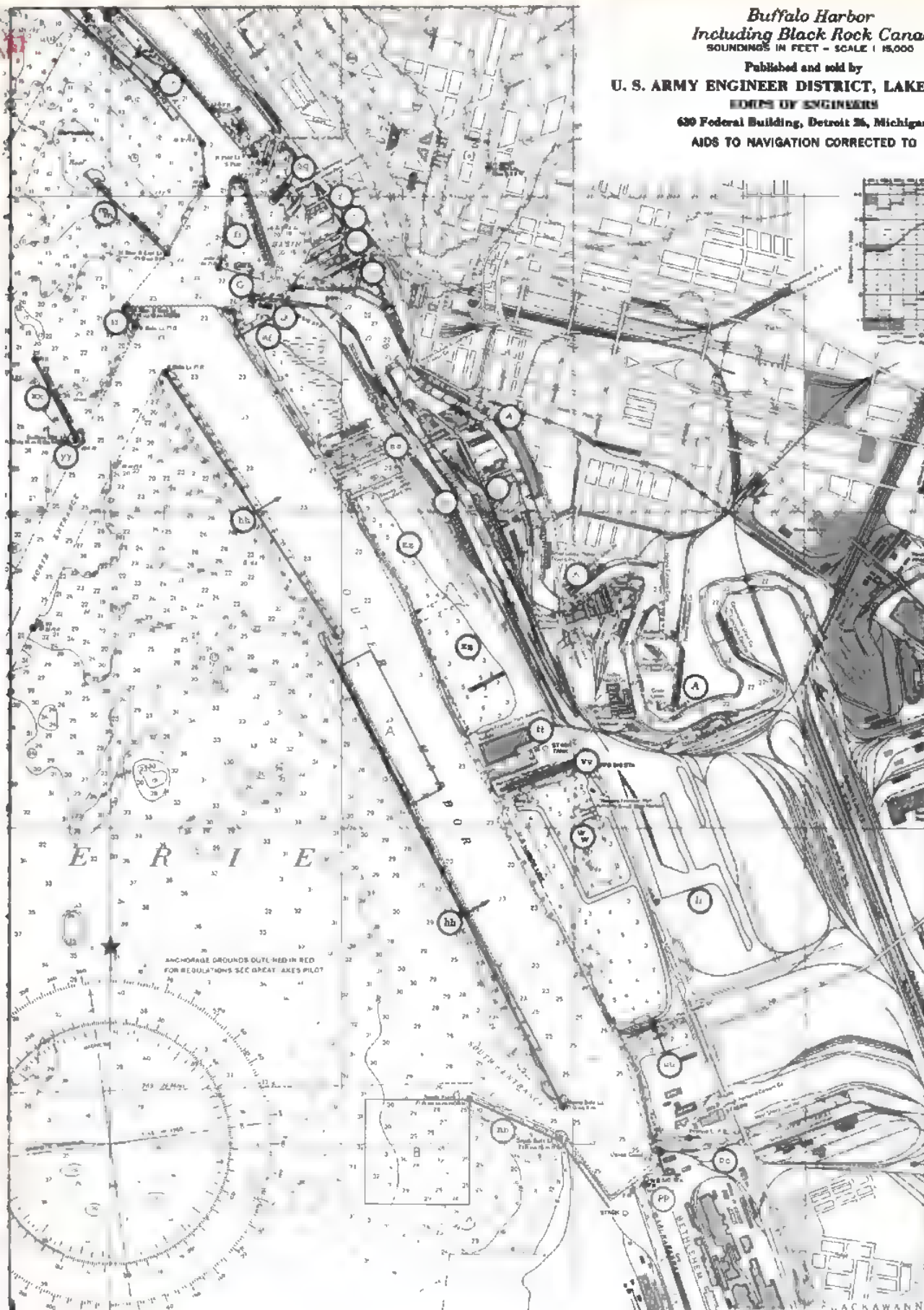


- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (A) Buffalo Creek -<br>Straightened & Re-aligned,<br>22' deep | (nn) South Entrance  |
| (D) South Pier  | (oo) Union Canal   |
| (G) 1833 Lighthouse<br>(None operational)                     | (pp) Lackawanna Canal -<br>Built 1903  |
| (H) Evans Ship Canal Remanent                                 | (qq) N.Y. State Barge Canal<br>Terminal - Not in use<br>(Templeton Terminal) |
| (O) Peacock Slip  | (rr) Blackrock Canal   |
| (Q) Shipyard (Abandoned)                                      | (ss) Municipal Piers   |
| (S) Erie Basin  | (tt) Niagara Frontier Port Authority<br>Terminal - Ex-Food Plant             |
| (W) City Ship Canal   | (uu) Pool Elevator   |
| (Y) Erie Slip   | (vv) Merchants Refrigerating Co. Pier  |
| (aa) Coit Slip  | (ww) Small Boat Harbor   |
| (ff) Erie Basin Breakwall                                     | (xx) West Breakwater - Completed 1963  |
| (hh) Outer Harbor   | (yy) New Buffalo Lighthouse<br>(4th in a series)                             |
| (ii) Breakwater Lighthouse                                    | (zz) Avec being filled for industrial<br>use                                 |
| (ll) Lehigh Valley Basin -<br>Landlocked                      |  |
| (mm) North Breakwater   |  |



**Buffalo Harbor**  
**Including Black Rock Canal**  
SOUNDINGS IN FEET - SCALE 1:15,000

Published and sold by  
**U. S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, LAKE SURVEY**  
**ENGINEERS**  
630 Federal Building, Detroit 26, Michigan  
AIDS TO NAVIGATION CORRECTED TO MAR 10 '65



SITES (Canals, Slips, Islands, etc.) OUT-  
LINED BY BLACK LINES, , HAVE TO BE RE-  
MOVED OR FILLED IN AND NO LONGER EXIST IN  
1965

Summary of Artificial Waterway Mileage

Channels Abandoned:-

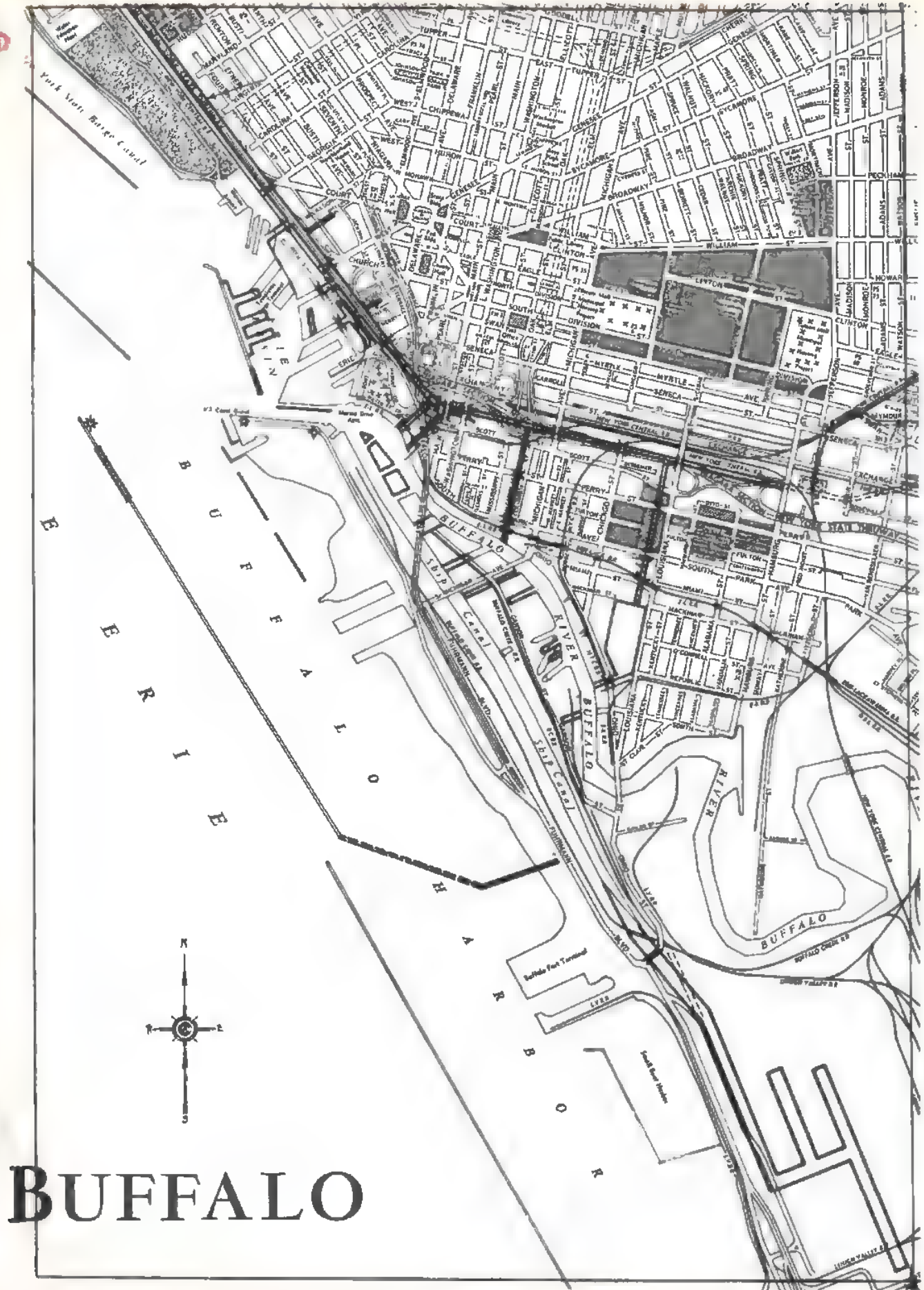
From Map #13	7.4 miles
From Map #8	3.1 miles *
Total Abandoned	10.5 miles

Channels still in use:-

From Map #8	4.5 miles
From Map #12	2.0 miles
Total still in use	6.5

Total all artificial	17.0 miles *
----------------------	--------------

\* Including Erie Canal north of Pennsylvania  
Ave. which is not shown on this reproduc-  
tion of Map #8.



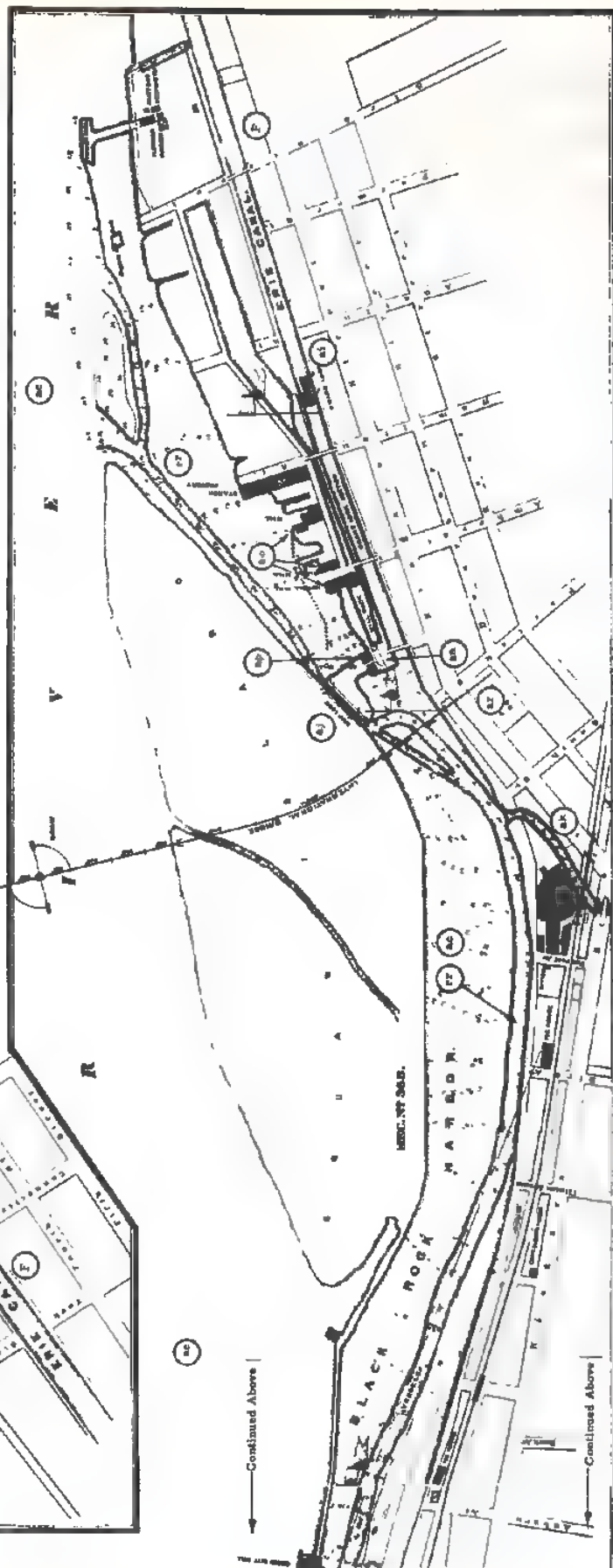


Black Rock General Map 1870  
From Canal Commissioners Report of 1871

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (F) Erie Canal   | (al) Ferry landing to Fort Erie in use until after World War II  |
| (rr) Black Rock Channel  | (am) Bird Island Pier  |
| (ab) Railroad Car Ferry Landing to Fort Erie - Grand Trunk R. R. (B. & L.H. R. R.)         | (an) Lock at head of Mill Race. 1824 Ship Lock from Black Rock Harbor to Niagara River                           |
| (ac) Black Rock Harbor   | (ao) Water powered flour mills. Large quantity of water used by these mills disturbed water levels in Erie Canal |
| (ae) Niagara River   | (ap) Erie Flour Mill - refer to photo  |
| (ai) Double Lock #72 of Enlarged Erie Canal (Guard Lock)                                   | (ar) International Bridge, Grand Trunk R. R.   |
| (aj) Slip Lock Black Rock Harbor to Niagara River. Superseded in 1906 by present lock (ag) |  |
| (ak) Scajaquada Creek - Navigable for short distance and site of early shipyards           |  |



Lock Tender & Ship Lock with Erie Mill in Background



- (F) Erie Canal
- (rr) Black Rock Channel
- (ac) Black Rock Harbor
- (ae) Niagara River
- (ai) Double Lock #72 of Enlarged (1836-62) Erie Canal. 110' x 18' x 7' depth for barges of 250 ton capacity. Lengthened in 1884 to handle 2 barges in tandem. A Clinton's Ditch Lock built 1825, 90' x 15' x 4' depth, was located near here. (75 ton barges). These were guard locks but due to variations in elevation of Lake Erie, there could be a lift of up to 14'. Gates at this point controlled the flow of water that supplied the canal to east of Rochester.
- (aj) Ship Lock 200' x 36'. A small lock completed 1824 preceeded this lock and formed a functional part of the 1st Welland Canal until 1833.
- (ak) Scajaquada Creek
- (ap) Erie Flour Mill - See picture
- (aq) Ship lock proposed 1903 and completed 1906. Still in use. As now planned, All America Canal will include a lock west of this location and sized 1000' x 100' x 35' depth
- (ar) International Bridge



200' x 35' Ship lock with present Ship lock under construction in background. Erie Flour Mill on right







ERIE CANAL  
FOOT OF W. GENESEE ST.  
BUFFALO, N.Y.  
LOOKING NORTHWEST

ON EVANS SHIP CANAL



1926  
BUFFALO WATERFRONT  
(JUST PRIOR TO FILLING  
IN OF ERIE BARGE CANAL)



"MOUTH OF ERIE CANAL"  
1915-20

FOOT OF MAIN STREET ABOUT 1895



LOWER MAIN 1930'S



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: -

Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society  
Maps #1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, Cover and Frontispiece

Buffalo & Erie County Library  
Maps #4 and 7

City of Buffalo, Department of Public Works  
Map #5

U.S. Army Engineering Corp.  
Maps #11, 12 and 14, Black Rock Lock Photographs

J. W. Clement Company  
Map #13 - Modern Portion

Bell Aerosystems Company  
Photograph of Hydroskimmer

Onondaga Historical Society  
Sketch for Barber & Howe Gazetteer

Canal Society of New York State  
Photograph (2)

Binding & Typography by McLean Business Services



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BELL AEROSYSTEMS COMPANY



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B. & E. C. H. S.